

Organ Pipe Cactus

NATIONAL MONUMENT
ARIZONA

This monument, named for a species of cactus rare in the United States, protects and preserves desert plants, animals, and natural features in a segment of the Sonoran Desert landscape that stretches from northwestern Mexico to southeastern California. Stark mountains, sweeping outwash plains, rocky canyons, creosotebush flats, and dry washes typify this beautiful but harsh land.

This is the meetingplace of plant-defined extensions of three deserts: the central gulf coast phase of the Sonoran Desert from the south, the California microphyll desert from the west, and the upland Arizona succulent desert from the east.

SEASONS

Winter days here are usually sunny and warm, with infrequent gentle rains, but occasional sub-freezing nighttime temperatures and chilly winds occur during December, January, and February. Clear skies and progressively hotter days are the rule during April, May, and June. From July through September, humid air from the Gulf of Mexico occasionally brings violent thunderstorms that account for about one-half of the 8½ inches of annual rainfall. Temperatures from about 95° to 105° F. are common in summer. Although winds may be expected any time of the year, sandstorms are unknown.

HOW TO REACH THE MONUMENT

Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument lies on the border of the United States and Mexico, 140 miles south of Phoenix and 142 miles west of Tucson. From Phoenix, take U.S. 80 to Gila Bend and then Ariz. 85 to the monument. From Tucson, take Ariz. 86 and then Ariz. 85 south.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND FACILITIES

There is a campground 1½ miles south of the visitor center. Concessioner food and lodging are not available within the monument. Hotels, motels, and restaurants are in Ajo and Gila Bend, Ariz., and Sonoyta, Mexico. A motel, post office, grocery store, cafe, and service station are in Lukeville, 5 miles south of the visitor center. A cafe, grocery store, motel, and service stations are in Why, 22 miles north of the visitor center.



REGULATIONS

Here are some things you can do to help preserve this magnificent outdoor museum:

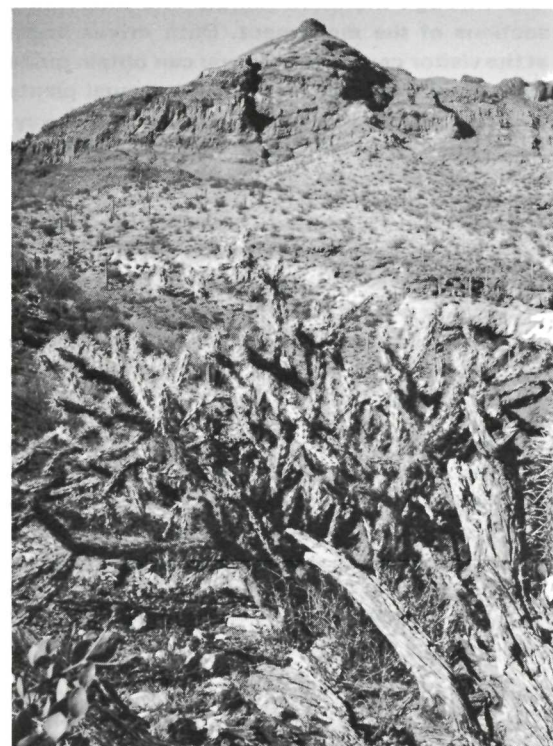
Leave all rocks, minerals, plants, wood, and Indian artifacts just as you find them.

Refrain from molesting the animals, and observe them from a safe distance.

Camp only in the designated campground.

Drive only on established roads and turnouts.

Place all your trash in litter cans.



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ADMINISTRATION

Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, established on April 13, 1937, and containing 516 square miles, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Box 38, Ajo, AZ 85321, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

HOW TO SEE THE MONUMENT

Your first stop should be the visitor center, 17 miles south of the monument entrance, where National Park Service personnel will help you plan your visit. Here you can obtain literature and study exhibits that explain the desert and describe the forms of life it supports.

On winter evenings, illustrated talks are given on the natural history of the monument; times and locations are posted in the visitor center and campground.

Scenic drives. Two graded scenic loop drives lead through the more remote and interesting sections of the monument. Both drives begin at the visitor center, where you can obtain guide booklets that will introduce the unusual plants and other features you will find along the way. The roads dip and wind, but you may drive safely over them at a cautious, leisurely pace.

The *Ajo Mountain Drive* provides a series of outstanding desert views. You travel close to the massive walls within the canyons of the Ajo Mountains and see many species of cactus, including some of the more impressive stands of the organpipe. Average time for this 21-mile trip is 2 hours.

The *Puerto Blanco Drive* parallels historic routes of early desert travelers as it circles the colorful Puerto Blanco Mountains and skirts the northern border of Mexico. Short side roads lead to a scenic foot trail at Dripping Springs, a manmade oasis at Quitobaquito, and a display of senita cactus in Senita Basin. Allow at least one-half day for this 51-mile trip.

Trails and hiking. The 1-mile Desert View Nature Trail leads from the campground to a nearby ridge overlooking the surrounding desert of the Sonoyta Valley. A self-guiding trail leaflet will help you to identify some of the common desert plants found in the monument. Another trail (1 1/3 miles) connects the campground with the visitor center. Other trails lead to Bull Pasture (1 1/2 miles) and Dripping Springs (one-quarter mile).

The sparse, open nature of the desert vegetation makes cross-country hiking possible almost anywhere within the monument. A park ranger can suggest trips based on his knowledge of the area and your interests. Always consult with him before attempting climbs or long hikes, and check in with him when you return.

TRAVELING IN MEXICO

There is free access into Sonoyta and westward on Mexico Route 2. However, if you continue into the interior or go to Rocky Point, you must have a tourist permit and a car entry permit, both of which may be obtained at the border. It may also be advisable to purchase Mexican car insurance at the border. To get a tourist permit, you must have proof of citizenship (birth certificate), and to get a car permit, your automobile registration.

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